

SECTION III—REMARKS

This amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action mailed June 16, 2004. Claims 1-35 are canceled and new claims 36-55 are added. Claims 36-55 remain pending in the application. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application and allowance of all pending claims in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Objections

The Examiner objected to claims 24 and 25 for being dependent on a rejected base claim, but indicated that these claims would be allowable if re-written in independent form including all the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims.

New claim 36 combines the limitations previously found in claim 24, its base claim (independent claim 13) and any intervening claims (claim 23). Applicant submits that new claim 36 is therefore allowable. As to new dependent claims 37-45, if an independent claim is allowable then any claim depending therefrom is also allowable. *See generally* MPEP § 2143.03; *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071 (Fed. Cir. 1988). Applicant submits that new claims 37-45 are therefore allowable by virtue of their dependence on allowable independent claim 36, as well as by virtue of the features recited in the claims. Applicants therefore respectfully request allowance of the claims.

New claim 46 combines the limitations previously found in claim 25, its base claim (claim 13), and any intervening claims (claims 23 and 24). Applicants submit that new claim 46 is therefore allowable. As to new dependent claims 47-55, if an independent claim is allowable then any claim depending therefrom is also allowable. *See generally* MPEP § 2143.03; *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071 (Fed. Cir. 1988). Applicants submit that new claims 47-55 are therefore allowable by virtue of their dependence on allowable independent claim 46, as well as by virtue of the features recited in the claims. Applicants therefore respectfully request allowance of the claims.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 11-13, 26, 30 and 31 as anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) by U.S. Patent No. 5,710,652 to Bloom et al (“Bloom”). Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner’s rejections are rendered moot by the cancellation of these claims.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected claims 2-10, 14-23, 27-29, and 32-35 under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as obvious in view of, and therefore unpatentable over, various combinations of the following references: Bloom, U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0171896 to Clark et al ("Clark"), and U.S. Patent No. 6,472,776 to Soto et al ("Soto"). Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner's rejections are rendered moot by the cancellation of these claims.

Conclusion

Given the above amendments and accompanying remarks, all claims pending in the application are in condition for allowance. If the undersigned attorney has overlooked a teaching in any of the cited references that is relevant to allowance of the claims, the Examiner is requested to specifically point out where such teaching may be found. Further, if there are any informalities or questions that can be addressed via telephone, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney at (206) 292-8600.

Charge Deposit Account

Please charge our Deposit Account No. 02-2666 for any additional fee(s) that may be due in this matter, and please credit the same deposit account for any overpayment.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: 9-15-04



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